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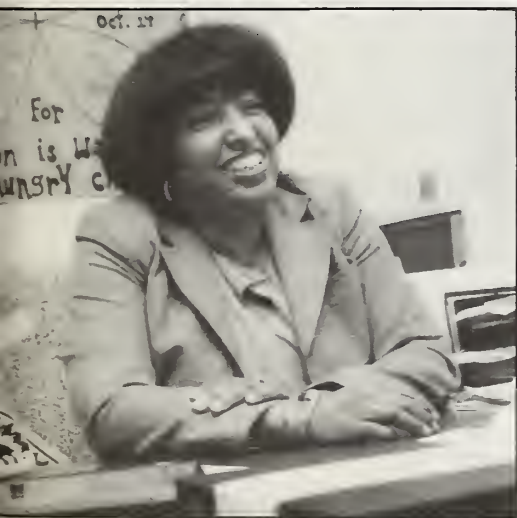
# Food & Nutrition

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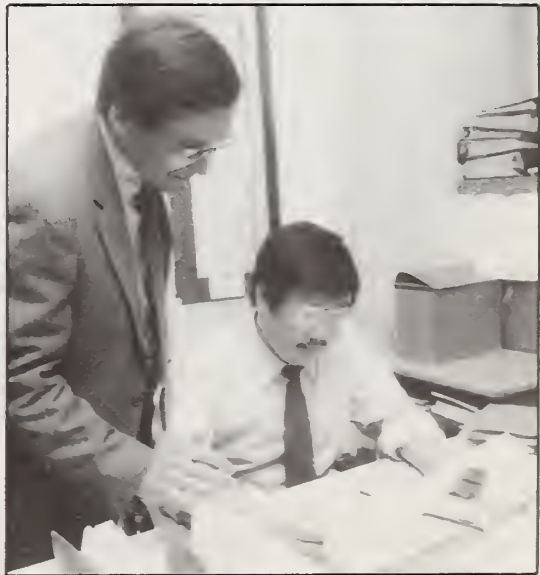
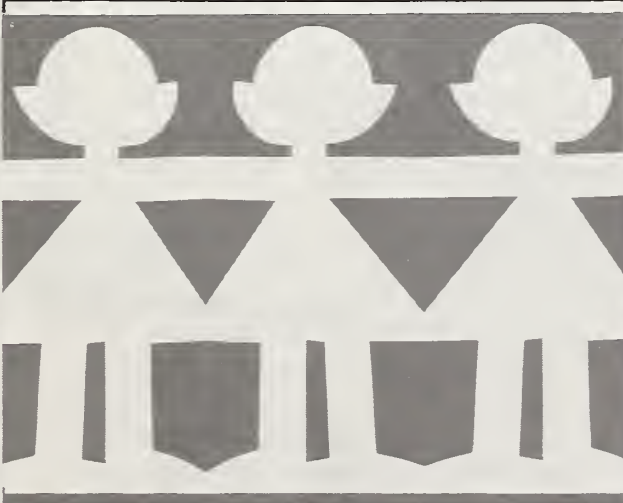
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**I**n this issue, we focus on community involvement in the food programs. Articles look at: — contributions of individual volunteers; — ways food stamp offices can use volunteers and how volunteer coordinators can help; and — efforts of federal, state, and local food program managers who go the extra mile to respond to and work with people in their communities.





# Gene Pitman: A Knight to Remember

Gene Pitman, a food program specialist with USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, believes in his agency's mission to help people in need. He also believes that we are our brother's keeper, and he lives this belief both on and off the job.

Because of Pitman's outstanding efforts in organizing volunteers to help the needy, he has won a number of awards for community service. Working through the Knights of Columbus in Maryland, he has been recognized at the state and local level by a number of awards.

Last summer, Pitman received national recognition by winning the George Washington honor medal from the Freedom Foundation at Valley Forge for the community programs category. The award was conferred at a special ceremony in the U.S. Capitol. In January, he was presented with a resolution on behalf of the State of Maryland and a proclamation from the governor in Annapolis.

Pitman has been with the Food and Nutrition Service since 1969, the year the agency became an official entity. Before joining FNS, he was cashier and manager for the A&P food stores. Brought up in an Irish Catholic family in Roxbury, Massachusetts, he learned early about thrift, hard work, and responsibility. As the eldest son whose father died when he was 12, he had to quit school and began working the next year as a provider for the family.

## **"I'll do the best I can"**

Pitman works in FNS' food distribution division and is involved in the inventory, shipping, and distribution of government foods around the country. The end product of these activities is getting food on the tables of the needy. One responsibility of the division is transporting shipments of food to disaster areas in the aftermath of floods and destructive storms.

One particular disaster—Hurricane Agnes in 1972—was

catastrophic to many people and a transformation in Pitman's life. Following the storm and flooding, he was sent to Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, with a team of food distribution specialists from the FNS Washington and regional offices to coordinate efforts with state and local workers.

Pitman kept track of the inventories and, as shelters were set up for the flood victims, he supplied the necessary amount and kinds of foods at the sites. Ordinary office hours went by the board. They worked double shifts or sometimes around the clock. They stopped only when every shelter was provisioned or food was on the way.

Pitman has worked other disasters since, but a meeting with one of the survivors of Hurricane Agnes changed his life on the spot. He had worked 19 hours that day around and through the flood devastation of Wilkes Barre. It was time to go home, and he was riding in a jeep with a couple of national guardsmen when they saw a lone woman walking along the darkened streets. Concerned for her welfare, Pitman suggested they stop to see if she needed any help.

They identified themselves to the woman and started to find out about her situation. They learned that the woman's home, husband, and three children had been washed away in the flood.

"I'll never forget that woman the rest of my life," Pitman says. Her loss was a dramatic example of how deeply and suddenly tragedy can strike. "I don't know what I can do to help," Gene told her, "but whatever I do, I'll do the best I can."

## **Returned home and got to work**

From that time on, Pitman's volunteer work on behalf of the poor and disadvantaged went into high gear. Through the Knights of Columbus, he developed a corps of 255 volunteers who work weekends and holidays. He also organized a list of blood donors for the elderly who are poor and is currently putting together an organ donor program.

He is enthusiastic about the volunteers he works with and directs. "One girl, who works for Agriculture and has a home comput-

er, filed all of the figures for the volunteer program. She worked a whole year on it. These are the types of people who are out there. It's amazing."

Under Pitman's direction, volunteers have donated more than 7,200 hours and driven 8,171 miles during the past 2 years alone.

They work on a variety of projects that include assisting at shelters for homeless or battered women and men; obtaining and providing free medical equipment; providing such items as food, clothing, furniture, appliances, and services to area soup kitchens, child day care centers, orphanages, hospitals, summer camps, and homes for the physically or mentally impaired; and transporting elderly people to appointments, religious services, and food stores.

Gene is known as the person to call if someone needs help or has something to give. Last year, for example, Holy Name College in northeast Washington was sold to Howard University for its divinity school. The college had to be vacated by the end of May and they needed help in the disposition of furniture, beds, mattresses, desks, table lamps, typewriters, and other items.

One day the director of the college called Gene and said, "We have 120 rooms of furniture, and you're welcome to whatever you can carry out of here on Saturday." Within hours, Gene organized a crew of volunteers with enough trucks to virtually empty all 120 rooms in one day.

Sometimes Gene will get four or five calls for help at home after work. As a result, he regularly sleeps only 2 or 3 hours a night, but insists this is sufficient for his needs. "And, if you enjoy what you do," he says, "that's not work."

## **Recognition is well deserved**

When he received the Freedom Foundation award in the Capitol, the pomp and circumstance and marble and statuary seemed intimidating. "There was Senator Baker, and my hometown Congressman Tip O'Neill. An admiral was on my right, and Senator Glenn asked me about my award. I'm a high school dropout from a ghetto in Roxbury.





Who would think I'd be sitting here?"

Those who know Gene and how many people he's helped have no doubt that he deserves every bit of recognition he's earned. But it's not the recognition that keeps him going. It's knowing, as he puts it, "there's so much out there to be done."

"If you can meet the challenge that's out there, that's a good feeling," he says. "I love my job because it's challenging, and I think that carries over to the nights and weekends."

"It's like disaster situations—we can do anything possible, within reason. I want them to remember that guy from Washington did the best he could."

For more information, contact:  
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article by Ralph E. Vincent  
photos by Larry Rana

July 1985

On a busy day in the spring, Pitman visits three of the many people he works with to help the needy (counterclockwise from top left): Dr. Veronica Maz, founder of a number of special aid programs; Sister Carol, medical officer for the Little Sisters of the Poor; and businessman Stan Stallings, who provides trucks and drivers when needed.



# Volunteers and the Food Stamp Program

In communities across the country, volunteers help hospitals, schools, churches, and charitable organizations provide needed services. In a number of areas, food stamp managers are finding that with careful planning, volunteers can be used successfully with the Food Stamp Program as well.

While volunteers can't be used for regular staff functions that involve certification or issuance, for reasons of confidentiality and security, there are many things they can do. For instance, they can:

- help people fill out applications and understand which documents they need to verify information;
- give people rides to and from food stamp offices and grocery stores;
- help food stamp clients plan meals, shop, and cook;
- help paid staff with filing, telephone coverage, and special projects like mass mailings.

## Volunteers can be used more

Tim Grace, president of the national association of food stamp directors, feels volunteers could be used more. "At this time," he says, "you're going to be hard pressed to find a lot of states that use volunteers. But I think it is something we can and want to do, especially with nutrition education."

As food stamp director in Illinois, Grace has started a new initiative to work more closely with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) located at the University of Illinois. Through EFNEP, Grace expects to be making use of volunteers to teach people about food and nutrition, using the new "Make Your Food Dollars Count" materials developed by USDA for food stamp recipients and other low-income people.

"EFNEP and the food stamp staff have been working with the same people for years, we just haven't been working together and we want to change that," Grace says.

According to Grace and other food stamp managers, food stamp

offices have had varying degrees of success using volunteers. Roy Clark, assistant food stamp director in Columbia, South Carolina, says, "Half of our offices would say they work with volunteers real well. The other half would say, 'I wouldn't touch them with a 10-foot pole.'"

"Some counties have had bad experiences with volunteers. The volunteers would come in for 2 or 3 days, and then they'd lose interest."

## Good management makes a difference

To guarantee reliability, many state, county, and charitable agencies hire paid volunteer coordinators whose sole job it is to work with volunteers. According to Martha Martin, of the National Association of Volunteer Administrators, a volunteer coordinator works much like a personnel officer.

"A volunteer coordinator helps you place the right person in the right job, works with you to provide training, and guarantees reliability," she says. "Good volunteer coordinators make the volunteers understand that this is a commitment, no different from any other job. In fact, some volunteer coordinators have their volunteers sign job contracts."

Dahlene Shen, volunteer coordinator for Oregon, agrees that the key to using volunteers is good screening and training. "Every volunteer has a motive for volunteering," she says. "The closer you can match their motives or needs with your assignments, the better off you're going to be."

Shen supervises a paid staff of county volunteer coordinators who find and manage volunteers at the local level. Each county in Oregon has a volunteer coordinator.

"We help with all service programs in the state—Medicaid, Aid for Families with Dependent Children, children's services," says Shen. Funding for the volunteer coordinators comes equally from state and federal sources. Part of their federal funding comes from the Department of Health and Human Services' Title 19 because of the work they do transporting clients to medical appointments; part comes from a social service block grant.

"We also have volunteers taking the clients to food stores, as well as

showing them how to make their food dollars stretch with shopping tips. We also have volunteers who work with cooking, which is especially helpful for some young clients."

Like Tim Grace, Shen feels the new "Make Your Food Dollars Count" materials will be a catalyst for using volunteers more. The "Make Your Food Dollars Count" materials include a slide show, posters, and pamphlets with smart shopping tips.

"I'm sure we'll be having volunteers organizing and doing actual training with these materials," Shen says. "It's an excellent way to use volunteers."

## Some advice on getting started

For agencies interested in using volunteers, a good place to start is seeing how other organizations have set up their volunteer programs.

According to Steve McCurley, from a national nonprofit organization called "Volunteer—the National Center," a first step is contacting an already existing volunteer organization you might work through. These organizations could include, for example, the United Way, the Red Cross, or a voluntary action center. State volunteer coordinators may be especially helpful.

"Right now," says McCurley, "about half the states have state-wide volunteer coordinators. They are usually attached to the state department of human services or the governor's office, and they make a big difference. North Carolina, for instance, is about 5 years ahead of everyone else in using volunteers because of their strong state-wide program."

Most large cities, and all capital cities, have volunteer action centers, according to McCurley. They should be able to help set up a volunteer program and may even manage it, or they may recruit someone to become volunteer manager.

Agencies considering large-scale, long-term volunteer programs may consider adding a person to their paid staff as a volunteer coordinator. "It's just like anything else," says McCurley, "if you have good people managers, you'll have good results."



The next steps in setting up a volunteer program:

- **Plan the job.** Work with a volunteer coordinator to assess your needs. Says Oregon coordinator Shen: "Make sure the needs are there and that they are well defined. I don't know how many times programs have been developed that people thought would be real nice, but then nobody used them."

- **Enlist the support of management.** "If you don't have internal support," says Shen, "your volunteer program is going to fail." In Oregon, for instance, the volunteer program relies on having clients referred from paid staff. Shen makes sure paid staff know what kind of services the volunteers can provide.

- **Write up job descriptions.** Analyze the job and how it should be done as carefully as you would a paid staff job. Part of this process, according to Shen, includes working with paid staff to make sure their positions are not undermined by volunteers.

- **Recruit and screen.** Work with your volunteer coordinator to try to make sure you have the right volunteer in the right job.

- **Place and train.** Analyze the training that needs to be done and work with the volunteer coordinator to see that time is devoted to training. "One of the biggest errors that's made," Shen says, "is throwing volunteers into assignments without much background or training and just expecting them to pick up the job and do it."

- **Supervise and evaluate.** "Volunteers are just like paid staff," Shen concludes, "they need supervision and constant reinforcement and recognition from the people they are working for."

For more information on working with volunteers, contact:

Dahlene Shen  
Community Relations Coordinator  
417 Public Services Building  
Salem, Oregon 97310  
Telephone: (503) 378-3680

Tim Grace  
Bureau of Food Stamps  
3616 South Second Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62762  
Telephone: (217) 782-1355

*article by Dianne Durant*

July 1985

## Sam Shapos: A Volunteer for Life

Volunteers. Can they really make a difference? Sam Shapos thinks they can.

Helping people is a way of life for Shapos. "Back when I was in Baltimore," he laughs, "I was running my own business as a commercial artist and steel-die engraver. People used to line up at my front door every Monday morning—and everyone got something."

Sam Shapos moved to North Port, Florida, 15 years ago. Fourteen years ago, he helped set up a meals-on-wheels program for elderly and handicapped people. Ten years ago, he started a volunteer program to provide free transportation to people needing medical services. Twelve years ago, he was appointed by the city commissioner to run volunteer social services.

### Still works as a volunteer

He works 60 hours a week, unpaid. Five years ago, he was given a paid part-time CETA worker who, he says, "became like a right arm." When CETA ran out, the city continued the position, but Shapos took extra steps to keep her around.

"I didn't want to lose her," he laughs, "so I married her 6 months ago." He loves the shock of it, and teases, "I think sometimes it takes a lot of nerve to get married at the age I did—I turn 77 this summer!"

His "right arm," the former Mary Hargraves, gets paid for 20 hours a week, but sticks in there for a full 60 just like Sam. Together, they cover the gamut of volunteer services in North Port, providing help with welfare, food stamps, utility assistance—anything that might help North Port people.

The town has about 8,500 people and is still growing, but it has a lot of homes for rent at cheap prices. As a result, it has attracted a number of people without jobs, mainly women between the ages of 19 and 38 who are divorced or separated and trying to support



If people need help, Sam Shapos knows how to get it. A long-time volunteer, Shapos runs volunteer services for North Port, Florida.



children. Jobs are scarce, says Sam, "but I guess Florida is a magic word."

When people need food stamps, the Shapos help them fill out applications. If they need help getting to the certification office, the Shapos take them there, wait for them, and bring them back home.

The Shapos also distribute free food. "I've got three refrigerators and a freezer to hold food, and I go out personally to raise money and food to fill them up. No one who comes in," Sam says, "no matter what condition, is ever turned away hungry."

### **Help in other ways as well**

If people need rent money, Sam Shapos tries to help them raise it. If people's utilities are threatened, he works with the local companies to guarantee payment and helps set up a payment schedule. If older folks are bedridden and have no one to care for them, Sam helps them find someone to come in.

One of the projects Sam Shapos got off the ground was a proposal to USDA to allow meals-on-wheels programs to accept food stamps—which was approved. "I'm a busy little bee down here," he chuckles.

The only time Sam gets frustrated with his job is if he can't help someone. "But usually," he says, "I find that I can go to my Kiwanis Club at a luncheon, ask if I can get the floor for 2 minutes, tell them I have a desperate family, and I get the help I need."

The most important thing in helping people, says Sam, is not what you know. "It's being able to really cry with people, to feel hurt with them. You can't put yourself in their position, but you empathize with them and as long as you do, you're going to do something for them. And that's your job."

For more information, contact:  
Sam Shapos, Director  
Volunteer County Social Services  
North Port Social Services  
North Port City Hall  
311 North Port Boulevard  
North Port, Florida 33596  
Telephone: (813) 426-2331

*article by Dianne Durant  
photo by Charles Lynch, FNS  
Tampa Field Office*

## **Food Stores Get Involved**

Many food stores across the country provide special services to their clients. Nutrition education, according to the Food Marketing Institute (FMI), is a growing focus for most food chains. Many also help with food assistance efforts by donating food to food banks, participating in fund-raising drives, and helping in other ways.

Community service, particularly service to people living on limited incomes, has long been a priority for the Atlanta-based Food Giant chain. The chain, which operates 77 stores in Georgia and 6 in Alabama, is currently involved in five efforts that help low-income people.

"We decided a seasonal commitment was not sufficient to meet the needs of a community," says Pat Thompson, director of corporate relations for Food Giant. "Although many stores provide special assistance during the holiday season, needs continue after Christmas. Food Giant stores try to do what they can to meet community needs year-round."

### **Transportation for elderly shoppers**

One way Food Giant addresses ongoing needs is by assisting elderly shoppers at some Atlanta stores. Since September 1984, Food Giant and the Atlanta Housing Authority have jointly provided a "Senior Shoppers" service to seven federally subsidized housing projects for the elderly. Most of the people using the service are food stamp recipients.

"There are many elderly people in this area who are not incapacitated and who are maintaining their own households," says Thompson. "It's necessary for them to go out and shop, but shopping is neither easy nor convenient for them. Many spend their meager income to hire taxis for trips to the store."

"We saw an opportunity to address this need so we approached the Atlanta Housing Authority with a proposal to form a partnership and operate the 'Senior Shoppers'

service on a trial basis."

The two organizations split the cost of a bus which visits the housing projects twice a month to pick up senior shoppers. The bus delivers the shoppers to Food Giant stores where extra staff are on hand to help them. The staff at these stores have been trained on the special needs of the elderly and are prepared to accommodate those needs.

For example, the stores are equipped with shopping carts designed for people in wheelchairs, and store employees help people in wheelchairs reach items on high shelves. The employees read labels for the shoppers, direct them to the locations of particular foods, and whenever possible, break packages into smaller sizes for them.

On a monthly basis, the buses transport about 500 people to the Food Giant stores. A private bus service furnishes the transportation at a reduced rate of \$700 per month for the 14 trips.

Food Giant is presently evaluating the Atlanta "Senior Shoppers" pilot project to determine whether the service should be modified and expanded to other areas.

### **Food donated all year long**

In other efforts throughout the year, Food Giant stores donate all their surplus and damaged, but still usable, food products to the Atlanta Community Food Bank. With the products it collects from Food Giant and other stores, the Atlanta Community Food Bank furnishes food to more than 250 churches and community organizations with emergency food box operations.

Also, Food Giant extends credit to the Salvation Army, the Red Cross, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society by accepting food vouchers from persons aided by these organizations. The redeemed vouchers are submitted to the organizations for payment each month.

During the holiday season, Food Giant stores step up their community involvement activities. Their big annual project is a "can-a-thon" that lasts from Thanksgiving until just before Christmas. Collection bins are set up in each store for customers to donate canned goods for needy families.



All of Food Giant's print and broadcast advertisements during December and the latter part of November mention the "can-a-thon" and encourage customers to participate. Around the middle of December, an Atlanta television station, which co-sponsors the "can-a-thon", holds an on-the-air appeal for 5 hours to further increase donations.

On that particular day, additional bins are placed in various collection sites throughout the city, and volunteers from Food Giant and the television station are located at each site to receive the donations of food and corporate donations of

funds. In 1984, more than 80 truckloads of food were collected and donated to the Salvation Army.

**Contributions also made individually**

Apart from the "can-a-thon", Food Giant employees also give personal contributions to the Salvation Army so the organization can provide gift certificates for food to needy families. Employees have contributed as much as \$20,000 at Christmas for this cause.

"There's an active link between Food Giant stores and the community," says Pat Thompson. "The community is where our employees

and our customers live and work. We try to serve the community well and meet its residents' food needs."

For further information, contact:  
Pat Thompson  
Director of Corporate Relations  
Food Giant  
450 Franklin Road  
Marietta, Georgia 30067  
Telephone: (404) 429-7888, Ext. 222

*article and photo  
by Brenda Schuler*

Evelyn Edison is one of several Food Giant clerks trained to assist elderly shoppers. Here she helps a man select canned goods.





# Churches Work Together In Vinton County

In few places is the spirit of voluntarism more vibrant than in Vinton County, Ohio.

Perhaps this is because of the county's demographics: roughly 11,000 residents sparsely spread throughout 420 square miles of tree-covered hills. Or perhaps it is because of the county's location: southeastern Ohio, hours away from any industrialized center.

But the reason is unimportant. What is important is that local citizens have recognized that collectively they can do more to help their less fortunate neighbors than they ever could individually.

Rev. Stuart Huffman is proud of the work of VCOM volunteers. He is pictured below in front of the McArthur United Methodist Church, VCOM's main office and site of the organization's food bank and food buying cooperative.

## An alliance of churches

For more than 13 years, hundreds of volunteers have been working together through the Vinton County Outreach Ministry (VCOM), an alliance of members and friends of the 14 United Methodist churches located throughout Vinton County. From these churches more than 200 volunteers work year-round providing services from 10 different VCOM programs.

Rev. Stuart Huffman, minister at the McArthur Methodist Church, directs VCOM's efforts. "The community realized early," says Rev. Huffman, "that through joint ministry they could do more things, accomplish more tasks than any one church could do by itself."

Of the churches' combined membership of 740 people, more than 30 percent are VCOM volunteers. Huffman estimates that on average, each volunteer puts in 10 hours weekly, bringing the annual total to more than 100,000 hours—a staggering amount for Ohio's second-least populated county.

"Why do I do it?" asks Marcia Moore, who works more than 4 days a month at the local food

buying cooperative. "I do it because it gives me an inward satisfaction knowing I'm helping people who need help."

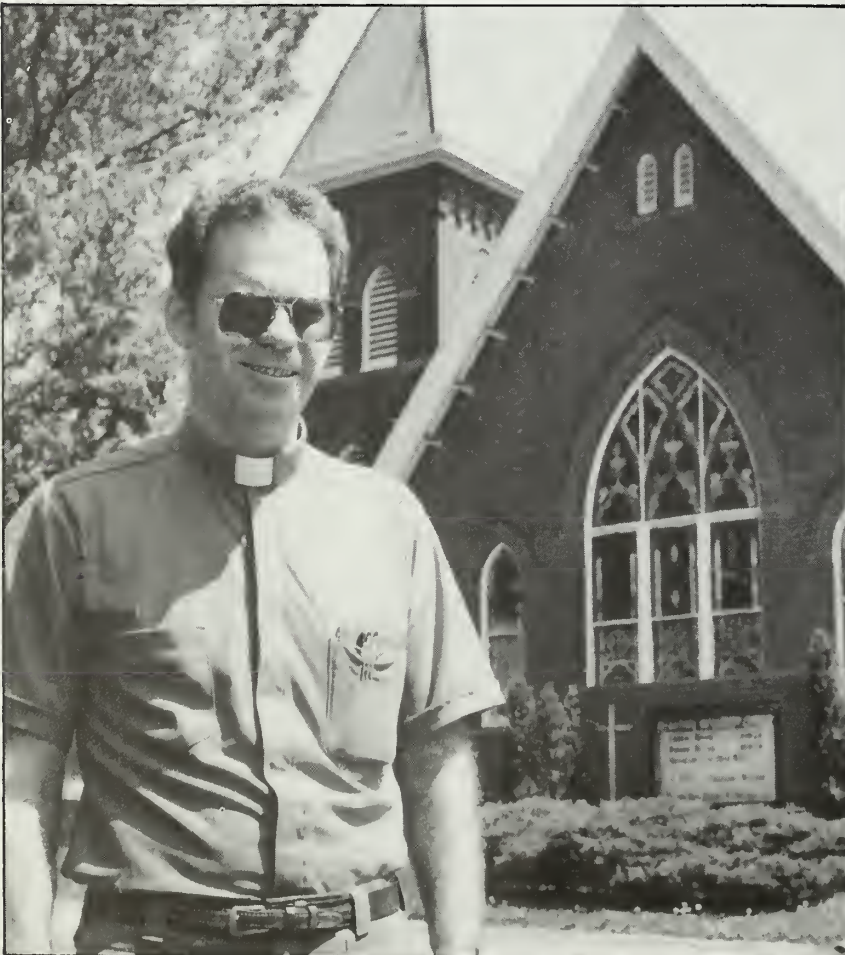
Retired for more than 5 years, Moore takes orders on Friday, then sorts and delivers the food, using her own car, when it arrives the following Thursday.

"We're doing a lot of good for people here in Vinton County," Moore says. "And we're making a noticeable difference in their lives. People can buy food in bulk quantities at the co-op so much more cheaply than they could in stores."

## Pantry meets emergency needs

Besides running a food co-op, VCOM volunteers also operate a highly successful food pantry. Like the co-op and other VCOM programs, the pantry is staffed by dozens of volunteers, many of whom spend 2 days or more a week working there.

Reverend Huffman is especially proud of the pantry's success. "In the 3 years I've been here," he says, "we've progressed to where last year we provided area residents with food for 3,800 meals."





The pantry is a source of emergency food. Families needing help are given enough food to prepare three meals a day for 3 days at a time. They may use the pantry's service up to four times a year, but, Huffman explains, this is not a hard and fast rule. If a household is having an especially rough time, volunteers will make sure their needs are met.

Part of the pantry's food comes from USDA through the Southeast Ohio Food Bank, located in an adjacent county in Nelsonville; part is purchased for 10 cents a pound from food banks; and the rest comes from local businesses, church drives, and anonymous donations.

#### **Other services also provided**

VCOM's activities are not limited to its food programs. In addition to the food pantry and co-op, the organization provides: vegetable seeds for home gardening and canning; kerosene heaters for emergency use during cold weather; emergency transportation to and from such places as doctor's offices and hospitals; and emergency lodg-

ing at local hotels and motels for stranded transients.

VCOM also has: counseling for alcohol dependency; a county-wide bloodmobile; a clothing bank at which used but good clothing can be purchased; and a youth work program in which county youngsters aid shut-ins by doing such odd jobs as mending fences, painting houses, and building sheds.

"I volunteer my time," says Twila Rose, who spends Fridays at the clothing bank, "because so many people around here need help. I can't give much, but I can give my time.

"Some people come in here and don't have hardly any good clothing," she says. "The clothes we get are usually in really good condition. Most are just things that people never really did wear.

"We put clothes on shelves or hang them on hangers, and the people walk around and can fill up a big plastic garbage bag for \$1.00. And if they can't afford that, we won't charge them at all."

Evelyn Turner works at the clothing bank 3 hours a week and helps with a variety of VCOM activities. Mrs. Turner, who retired several

years ago, says she looks forward to working with the other volunteers.

Her work with VCOM keeps her busy. "I sort and bag food for both the co-op and the pantry," she explains, "and I also help register people when we sponsor a blood drive and help with the seed program in the spring. I'm busy a lot, but so are a lot of the men and women around here. And the kids, too. They do a lot in the summer youth programs.

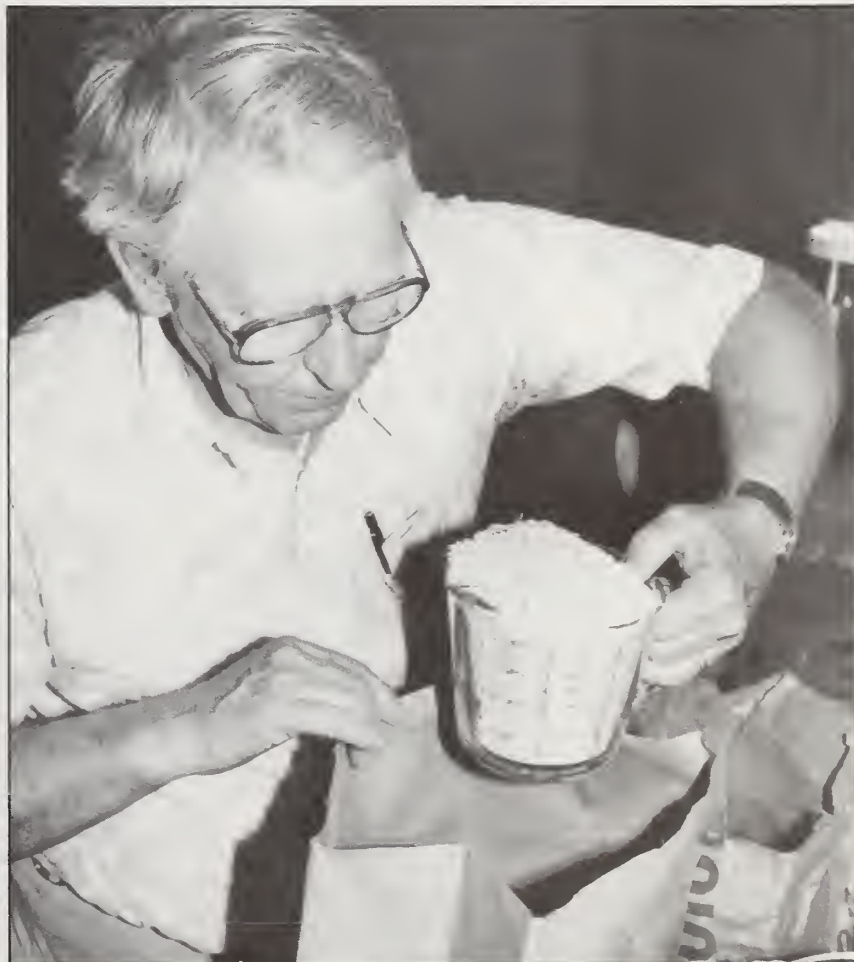
"We just all pitch in," she adds, "and do what has to be done."

For more information, contact: Reverend Stuart Huffman  
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McArthur, Ohio 45651  
Telephone: (614) 596-2394

*article and photos  
by Michael Fluharty*

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VCOM volunteers help with a variety of community food needs. Here volunteers help prepare lunch for a meals program serving the elderly (*center*) and sort and package food for the food buying co-op (*left and right*).





# Truck Deliveries Make A Difference in Shelby County

Charles Faust operates a delivery service that makes getting food help a lot easier for women and children participating in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program in Shelby County, Tennessee.

Faust, warehouse manager for more than 6 years at the Memphis and Shelby County Health Department, is proud of the delivery service and of the staff that runs it. The service is quite unlike any other in the Southeast.

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (or CSFP) provides USDA-purchased commodities once a month to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women; infants; and children up to age 6.

The food packages are specifically designed to provide supplemental foods to this nutritionally vulnerable group. CSFP food packages contain such products as dry milk, infant formula, egg mix, peanut butter or dry beans, and canned meats, fruits, and vegetables.

In most areas that have CSFP, the program is administered by state

and local health agencies in cooperation with USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. In Tennessee, the CSFP is administered by the State Department of Health and Environment and operated in four counties—Dyer, Shelby, Davidson, and Weakly.

## Deliveries made throughout county

The service that is unique to this community is a truck delivery operation that brings CSFP food packages to 11 different sites throughout Shelby County. CSFP participants can pick up their food at one of these sites or at one of the two Memphis food warehouse locations.

"On a sunny day, this park looks like the Fourth of July with children playing and mothers visiting," says Faust as he oversees the distribution of CSFP food packages at a truck site in Millington, Tennessee.

"Without the truck delivery program," says Faust, "some of these people could not afford the drive downtown to the warehouses to pick up their food." The drive from

Millington is approximately 25 miles from downtown Memphis.

Participants appreciate having this service closer to their homes. The county has been operating the delivery service for more than 15 years.

"Out of some 13,000 people served by CSFP through the Shelby County Health Department, we serve 3,000 at our truck delivery sites," says Faust. At these sites, the clients present their ID cards to the health department staff and are given an order form indicating which food package they are to receive.

When the client accepts the package, she signs for it and returns the signed order form to the staff. The participant is notified at this time if she needs recertification prior to the next month's pick up date. Participants must be recertified for eligibility every 6 months. The completed forms are then returned to the main office where the information is recorded.

## Deliveries save county money

"It is a very basic and simple procedure—direct delivery from the warehouse to the participant, and it saves money for the client and the county. We'd probably have to have another warehouse to serve the outskirts of town if it weren't for these truck sites," says Faust. The same staff serves the central warehouse and all 11 truck stops.

All truck delivery sites, as well as the two warehouses downtown, are supplied through a central warehouse. Although this central warehouse covers some 15,000 square feet, the staff has an efficient method of inventorying their stock every day of the week.

"If there is a problem with our numbers, we discover it when it is made, not a week or a month later. It is much faster and cheaper to correct an error this way," says Faust.

The health department is also concerned about the quality of the foods received in the packages. "In



*Left:* Charles Faust goes over the delivery schedule with a member of his staff. *Right:* A CSFP participant signs for her food package at one of the 11 distribution sites.



order to keep the foods their freshest, we maintain temperature control throughout the summer and winter at our warehouses.

"We also turn the entire pallet of our liquid cases every time we move them. This prevents the separation of milk products or juices, which would make the products look unappetizing," says Faust.

### **Special efforts make a difference**

"We take special pride and care in the job we do. The little things we do differently in Shelby County make a big difference in the quality service our clients receive. Our staff is a group of hard-working people. They feel good about the job they're doing. Without them, my job

would be impossible," says Faust.

The Memphis and Shelby County Health Department has also implemented an appointment system for picking up the CSFP food packages at the two Memphis warehouses. When the participant is certified, she is assigned a time-frame within which to go to the warehouse (either South Memphis or Guthrie) to receive her monthly package.

This system went into place during the early 1980's. Since that time, there has been a dramatic improvement in the length of a time a participant has to wait for her food package.

"Now, unless there is a special problem, no one waits more than 10 minutes to pick up her package. The clients are spaced during the

day so there isn't a crunch at any time," says Faust.

In both the truck delivery service and the appointment system, the Memphis and Shelby County Health Department saw a need in the community and responded in ways that benefit the county as well as participants.

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*article by Diana Swindel  
photos by Larry Rana*





# How Arlington County Meets Refugees' Needs

During the past 10 years, Arlington County, Virginia, has become a magnet for the newest American immigrants—refugees. Commercial Arlington boulevards that used to flash “Sears” and “Wards” signs now include “Duc Tran’s Grocery” and “Asian Artifacts.”

Located just minutes from the nation’s capital, Arlington now has a sizeable Indochinese community as well as immigrants from Afghanistan and Ethiopia. In a study done by the federal government several years ago, Arlington was identified as one of the areas in the country most heavily impacted by refugees.

Community groups, county officials, and public assistance officers have worked hard to respond to their new neighbors’ needs. Almost from the start, the county set up special units staffed by professionals and former refugees to provide orientation, job and language training, and referral services for health screening and public assistance.

A recent survey commissioned by Arlington County to assess the needs of refugees from more than 23 countries shows that more than 51 percent are working full or part-time. They are trying to improve their adaptability and employability through education—79 percent are taking English classes, and 37 percent are taking other classes.

But day-to-day life is still a struggle for them. More than three-fourths of the families have incomes less than \$13,000 a year and report personal and family problems caused by the stress of trying to adapt to a new environment.

## Assistance is client oriented

When refugees need food and financial aid, they are referred to the Arlington Department of Human Services, which operates the Food Stamp Program and a number

of other services.

At first, according to bureau chief Doug Smarte, refugees referred to his programs were accompanied by a translator provided by the refugee assistance group. When a translator wasn’t available, says Smarte, his agency tapped into funds from social services for translating help.

This system worked for several years, Smarte says, but social services funds were running out “and we knew there was a better way of doing the job.” That better way turned out to be hiring people from the refugee community to work as caseworkers themselves.

The first former refugee was hired about 8 years ago, and today Arlington’s 31 caseworkers include 4 Vietnamese, 1 Laotian, 1 Ethiopian, and 1 Afghani. Among the 120 staff workers, Smarte estimates they have translating capabilities for more than 20 languages.

Hiring caseworkers who are part of the community they are serving is consistent with Smarte’s philosophy of being “client-oriented.”

“The most important thing I can do,” he says, “is hire people who are client-centered. If you have

people on the staff who have an attitude that says, ‘We’re here to help,’ then you get a natural boost out of that—a boost that you can’t always predict. You can’t tell what spin-offs there will be, but it makes a big difference.”

## Various kinds of help given

Obviously, the biggest advantage to hiring caseworkers from refugee communities is that they know how to communicate with the people they are trying to serve, Smarte says. Communication, he points out, is a very subtle thing.

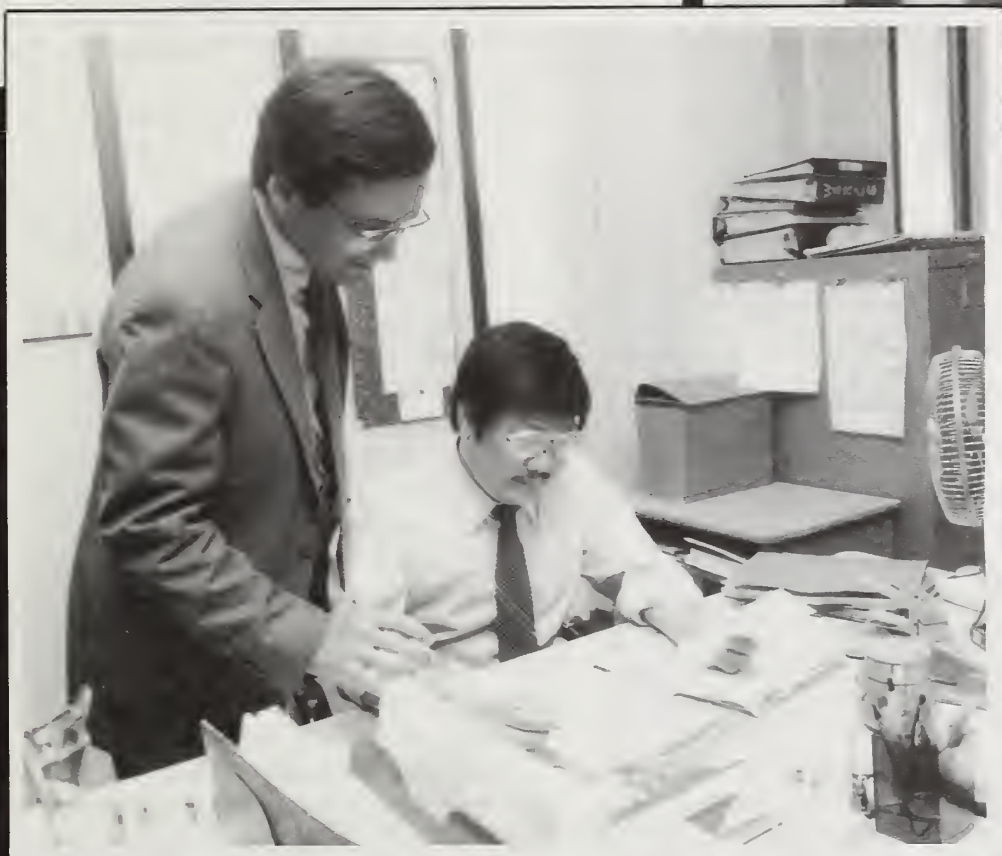
An Indochinese may nod his head, which to a Westerner means agreement or understanding. For the Indochinese, it may only be an acknowledgement of the authority of the person who is speaking. It doesn’t necessarily mean that what is being said is understood.

“These are the unique kinds of subtle support that can be provided by caseworkers who are drawn from their own communities,” Smarte says.

As a result of the recently completed study on the needs of refu-







*Left: A caseworker explains application procedures to a client at the Arlington Department of Human Services. Center: Duc Do (right) and Doug Smarte look over some records.*

gee populations, Smarte expects to be doing more in the future to provide written translations of materials and make people aware of help that is available.

The report itself notes that a high percentage of refugees do seek food help and are satisfied with the assistance they receive. Housing, health care, employment, and education continue to be challenges for refugee populations and high priorities for Arlington County people trying to help their new neighbors in need.

Duc Do is a Vietnamese refugee who came to this country in 1967. He has worked as a caseworker for Doug Smarte and agrees that Arlington is very sensitive to refugees' needs.

"As a worker, I am very comfortable—very happy—with the way special populations are being treated," he says. The translators and translated materials that Arlington provides are invaluable, according to Do. But most important to the refugees, he says, are the native caseworkers.

"Native workers can help refugees understand the steps they

need to go through to get help as well as the documentation they need to verify information," he says.

Native workers are also helpful in filling out forms. "Not all refugees are capable of handling forms," says Do, "and some of the questions are difficult for them to understand by themselves."

Getting the word out to refugee populations is not much of a problem, according to Do, "because refugee communities are small and tend to stick together."

#### **Refugees are managing well**

Do feels that most of the refugee populations manage very well, "taking into consideration they are in a strange country and most of them do not speak English."

Part of the Indochinese ability to adjust, he feels, is inherent. "They have come from an area of the world where people have to be very aggressive as well as very patient and very enduring in order to survive. I think that taught them the art of survival.

"We've learned how to look out for each other, ask for advice,

where to get help, where to go for jobs. Refugees are also very willing to take in their relatives or friends.

"What we are really looking forward to, though," says Do, "is having our population be successful like previous American immigrants. I am looking forward to seeing in government and business names like Yen and Duong.

"Taking people in is one of the things that has made this country unique. I am very proud of this country," he says.

"Sometimes it seems a little cold, but it encourages people and motives people to work hard and come up with new ideas. It has permitted all kinds of citizens to come in and show off their strengths and compete against each other—but we are still united under one flag."

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*article by Dianne Durant  
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# School Lunch In Memphis Is A Community Affair

Shirley Watkins, director of food and nutrition services for the Memphis City Schools, believes that the only way to have a good, strong school lunch program is to have the support of the whole community.

"My primary concern is that we do what is necessary to provide nutritious meals that children like while we develop a good relationship with the parents. If the program is to be effective for children, then we have to involve the parents as well," Watkins says.

She encourages and receives strong community support for the 156 schools and more than 95,000 students served in Memphis school meal programs. Parents respond because Watkins gets them interested in school lunch. Parent meetings are held often to explain the program's nutrition requirements and rules, such as the verification of household income to confirm eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals.

## Parents' input is important

"We listen to what parents tell us because their input is important," says Watkins. "If we get any criticism, we invite parents to get involved in some advisory capacity, such as helping on a committee. Most of the time we win parents over once they see what requirements must be met and what we are trying to do for their children."

Parents have been helpful in distributing information on free and reduced price school meals, showing other parents how to fill out application cards correctly.

"In addition," says Watkins, "parents told us how we could change the verification process to get the information we needed. As a result of their advice, we now provide information to low-income parents through housing projects and community groups to let them know about income verification."

"Offer versus serve," a plan that allows students to select any three of the five available lunch components, has been used for a number of years in Memphis city schools. Shirley Watkins also allows kindergarten children to serve themselves family style at the lunch table.

"There was one parent who was very concerned that her child was going to serve herself. After observing for several days, she volunteered to help with the program and eventually became a school food service employee. That's one parent we thought we'd never win over," Watkins laughs.

## Parents involved in learning, too

Watkins and her staff make school lunch an integral part of the educational program. A comprehensive nutrition education plan, the Memphis Nutrition Information Program (NIP), reaches students, teachers, cafeteria personnel, parents, and the community through school assemblies, faculty and parent meetings, classroom demonstrations, food service training workshops, teacher training, and coordinated community projects.

NIP is part of the statewide

Tennessee Educates for Nutrition Now (TENN) program, a sequential nutrition education plan for kindergarten through grade 12 that encourages sensible eating habits by teaching the fundamentals of good nutrition.

Other goals of TENN include:

- training educators and food service personnel in nutrition;
- promoting school and community support for a coordinated nutrition education program;
- promoting proper diet, exercise, and health habits for the maintenance of "ideal" weight and optimum health;
- providing training in menu planning, quality food preparation, and merchandising.

In Memphis, many "hands on" experiences are provided to students and parents. Kitchen tours, tasting parties, and food demonstrations complement classroom activities.

"We want the cafeteria to be a true learning laboratory," says Watkins. "Children help us design cafeteria layouts and decide what foods are served. One of the parents' favorite activities is making different nutritious snacks for children."





### Activities reach people of all ages

One of the people helping Memphis students know the right foods to eat is nutrition consultant Helen Royer, who supervises Memphis City Schools' Nutrition Information and Training Center. The center, which Shirley Watkins set up in the fall of 1978, houses more than 550 publications and resources on nutrition—more than the public library.

The center is located in a vocational center and includes audio-visual materials, posters, and pamphlets on topics such as low-cost meal preparation and menus, including menus for meals that pre-adolescent children prepare.

"We encourage parents to check out materials and discuss nutrition with their children at home," says Royer.

Probably the best known and best loved nutrition teacher in Memphis is Nutri-Duck, a costumed mascot that has been making public appearances at schools, parent meetings, and community activities since the spring of 1978. Watkins came up with the idea for Nutri-Duck after seeing how children responded to the song "Disco-Duck," made popular by Memphis singer Rick Dees.

"Our first Nutri-Duck outfit consisted of feathers glued on terry-cloth," says Royer. "This didn't last too long since the children tended to pull off the feathers." The present Nutri-Duck costume was designed by the company that makes costumes for Walt Disney characters.

Royer tries to present nutrition tips at all Nutri-Duck appearances and often gets parents and students to wear the costume. Nutri-Duck also goes to senior citizens' and child care centers to lead exercises or talk about diet and health.

### Community served in various ways

Helping in community nutrition education are student youth advisory councils (YAC's), which in



*Left:* Shirley Watkins, director of food and nutrition services for Memphis schools, talks about her lunch program. *Right:* Nutrition consultant Helen Royer dresses as Nutri-Duck.



elementary schools are called Nutri-Duck clubs. The clubs are involved in a number of nutrition-related activities, including assembly programs held in conjunction with National School Lunch Week, National Dental Health Week, and Nutrition Month. According to Watkins, these activities are a good way to involve parents as well as children.

"If the children get involved at school," she explains, "the parents are going to come to these programs. This gives us an opportunity to promote the school food programs and good nutrition at the same time."

While involving parents is a high priority for Watkins, she doesn't stop there. Other activities, such as the senior citizens' day luncheon, are held to honor different com-

munity groups. Memphis schools also serve the community by sponsoring nutrition sessions and sports activities, such as weight control seminars and "fun runs."

The Memphis City School System was one of the first to start an "Adopt-A-School" program, which creates a special partnership between schools and the community. Through this program, local businesses "adopt" a school and provide financial aid, career guidance, or other voluntary services for students. Watkins and her staff work closely with the program and usually honor sponsoring businesses with a luncheon.

### **Working for school lunch**

Watkins believes in the National School Lunch Program and shares her enthusiasm and ideas with school food service directors throughout the country. An active member of the American School Food Service Association (ASFSA), she has been head of ASFSA's Major Cities School Section,

worked on the Youth Advisory Committee, and served on numerous other panels and committees.

Her success in involving and serving her community is well known. So is her devotion to children, which is at the center of everything she and her staff do.

"We've done a number of innovative things, remembering that school lunch should be fun," Watkins says. "We also know that this is the only meal for some of our children, and we want to make it a good experience for them."

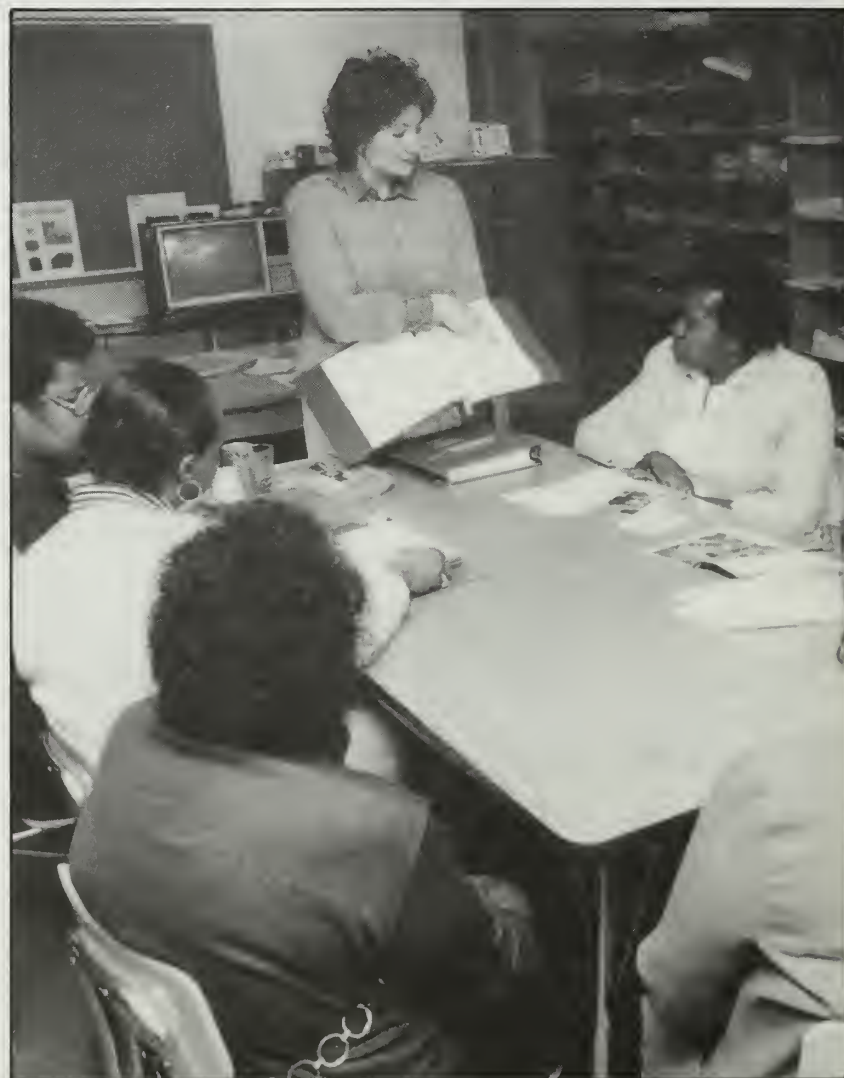
Under Watkins' leadership, Memphis City Schools will continue to make school food service an innovative, community affair.

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*article by Kent Taylor  
photos by Larry Rana*

*Below: During a visit to the Nutrition Information and Training Center, some parents look over nutrition resource materials and meet with Helen Royer. The center has more nutrition education materials than the local library.*







## Special Activities In Kansas Bring Nutrition To Life

The Kansas State Department of Education is undertaking three separate activities to bring the message of good nutrition to young Kansans and their parents. In each case, the department has involved other groups in the state in cooperative efforts designed to spread still further in coming years.

### Food and history a winning mix

In one project, called "Kansas Foodways," state education staffers have worked with staff from the state's historical museum in Topeka. Starting this fall, docents at the brand-new museum will be leading special tours and telling school children about the nutritional habits of Kansans in earlier historical periods.

In addition, there will be an outreach program for schools at too

great a distance to undertake Topeka field trips. The outreach program will consist of a slide/tape presentation entitled "Enough to Eat: Kansas in the 1860's." It will include a packet of teaching materials focusing on food and nutrition habits of Kansans during the Civil War and Reconstruction periods.

According to Katie Armitage, who has been the program specialist for the project under the direction of Jim Powers, head of the museum's educational division, this period was chosen for several reasons.

For one thing, it was an important decade in the history of this food-producing state. "The period from 1860 to 1870 saw the beginnings of dietary change," she explains. "Settlers—mostly from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri—brought food-ways based on a pork-and-corn diet."

The end of this period also marked the beginnings of the Kansas beef industry. "After the Civil War," says Armitage, "the Texas longhorn herds had built up, and surplus beef cattle were driven to market in Kansas.

"An entrepreneur, Joseph McCoy, got the idea of putting cattle on the new railroad and shipping them back East. For the first time, beef became inexpensive enough to be within reach of working people. Kansas played an important role in this time of dietary change."

Other historical highlights from the decade illustrate the direct relationship between diet and health, a message project coordinators want to get across to children.

As Armitage explains, researchers working on the Foodways project found that soldiers stationed in forts in the western part of Kansas immediately after the Civil War (around 1865-1867) had a problem with scurvy, due to the lack of fresh foods. Potatoes and onions were about the only transportable fresh foods they had.

### Project will be used widely

The project has been planned to provide a state and regional focus for American history courses and nutrition classes at the junior high school level. It will also be used in Kansas history courses at all levels.

Project materials contrast diet

and health in earlier periods with today. One contrast, for example, is the underconsumption of calories in the 1860's and the common overconsumption of calories today. Availability of foods is another contrast. Included in teachers' materials is a selection of recipes from the earlier time (hardtack, for example), to provide opportunities to discuss dietary contrasts.

The Kansas State Historical Society expects to have an easy job introducing these materials to schools. Kansas schools now make great use of other materials furnished by them, and an announcement will be circulated to all Kansas schools to introduce the new project.

### Poster contest held each year

Another project is an annual nutrition poster contest for elementary school children that has been held each of the past 3 years. Last year's contest brought 6,500 entries on the theme, "Nutrition is Important...Ask Any Body!"

Students compete in three separate divisions—grades K-2, grades 3-4, and grades 5-6—and every contestant receives a certificate. Each district selects three divisional winners whose posters are then submitted for state judging.

The three first-place state winners are treated to an expense-paid trip to Topeka for themselves, their parents, and their teachers. They stay overnight and tour the Capitol, and each receives an engraved plaque, usually presented by the Governor.

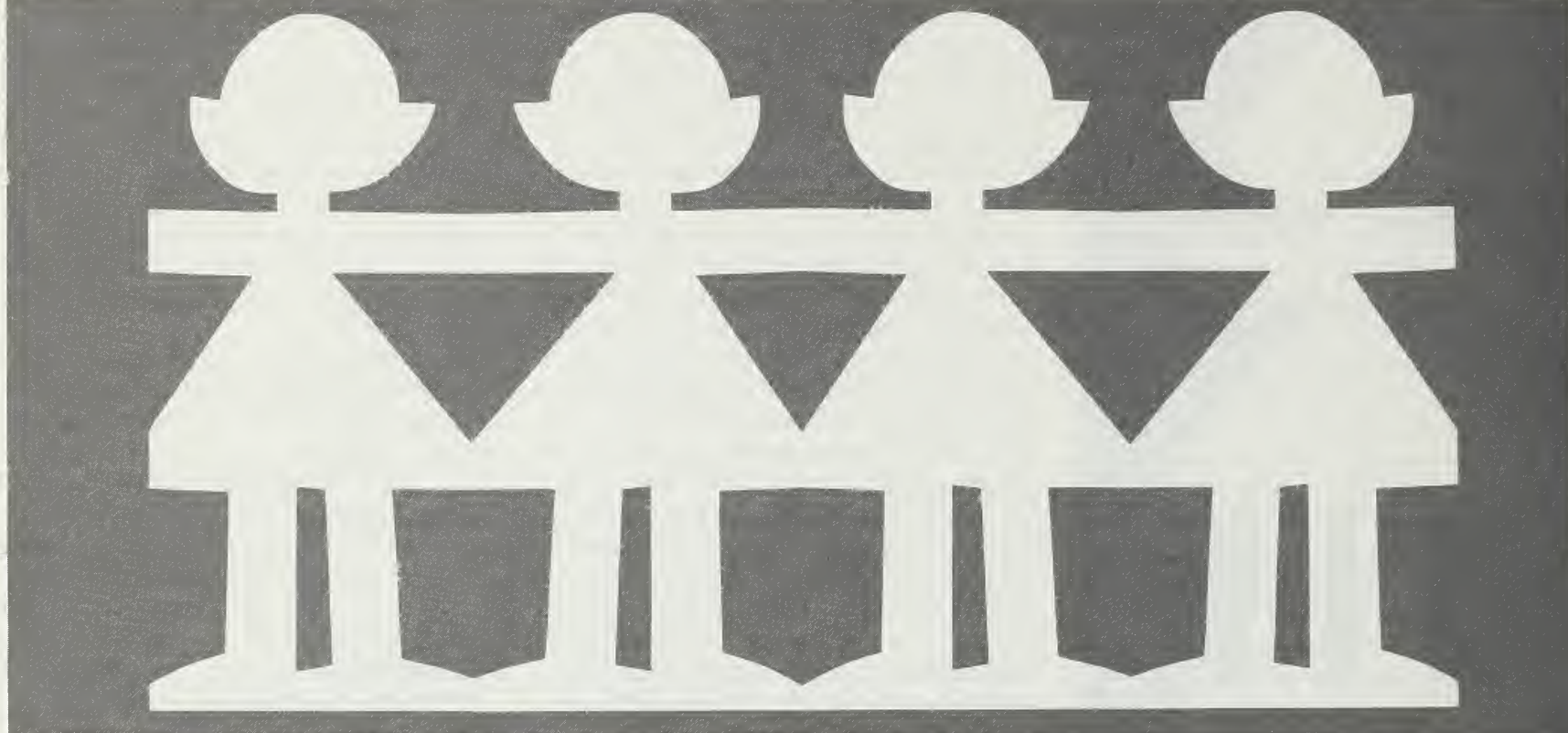
The contest generates considerable excitement throughout the state. Copies of the three winning posters are printed and distributed to all elementary schools. This year's theme echoes the American School Food Service Association theme, "Champions of Nutrition."

### Folders help get message across

Helping kids become "champions of nutrition" is also the goal of the third statewide effort, which enlists the support of parents, teachers, coaches, food service staff, nurses, and counselors.

In this project, state staffers have developed a series of folders, tailored to particular audiences, to





supplement the "ABC's of Nutrition Education" curriculum for kindergarten through sixth grade.

The first of these folders is designed for use by high school coaches. It includes a sample letter to athletes' parents, stressing the importance of diet during training and competition. The folder also includes information on nutrient sources, pregame meals, fluid intake, nutrient intake, and weight gain and loss.

The Kansas State High School Activities Association has distributed the folder to all coaches in the state. Results of a postcard survey conducted last spring indicate a positive reaction from coaches. Additional copies are being made available to new coaches and to other interested people.

Ruth Leahy of Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas, was involved in producing the coaches' folder. Her husband, Mike Leahy, is varsity basketball coach at Manhattan High School and president of the Kansas Basketball Coaches Association. Mike provided valuable input during the planning stages and is enthusiastic about the end result.

"The only training we coaches had had," says Leahy, "was what we'd heard, and some of that was just old gossip. A few of the coaches may not pay much attention, of course, but most of them

want to know what's right to eat on game day."

Leahy says that the folders are used on Parents' Night. "Every year," he says, "we have kids and parents ask if what you eat makes a difference." He can see the growing importance of nutrition to high school students, who are much more aware of eating right than they used to be.

Leahy runs off copies of the information in the folder, so kids can take it home. He thinks he's getting better results than when kids used candy bars for a quick energy boost and ended up "going hyper."

Joyce Dierking, Kansas nutrition education and training coordinator, says, "We had heard so many comments about the misinformation that coaches had and were providing to the athletes, the need was evident."

#### **Lunchroom folder also distributed**

A second folder was created for food service personnel. It includes a laminated poster with accompanying nutrition symbol stickers identifying the "A Team" (nutrients such as vitamins A, calcium, iron, etc.) to help students learn to identify and analyze nutrients in their menus.

It also sparks interest with a Riddle-a-Day pad, tying bad puns to good nutrition concepts. ("What

food has vitamin B<sub>N</sub>—niacin—and has ears but cannot hear? Corn, of course!")

The lunchroom folder was distributed at back-to-school workshops conducted in July and August 1984. Materials are now being used in elementary school lunchrooms, but an evaluation has not yet been done.

This year, two more folders will be added to the series. One for school nurses will cover diet and health, and one for secondary school counselors and nurses will address eating disorders.

On three separate tracks, Kansas is following a wholesome approach to better nutrition for its citizens through increased awareness for children, parents, school food service personnel, counselors, and cultural providers. It's a multidimensional reinforcement of an important message, for healthier Kansans tomorrow.

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*article by Joanne Widner*





## Teamwork Is Key To New Project In South Dakota

Helping children with special needs often requires careful coordination between schools and parents. This is as true in the school lunchroom as it is in the classroom.

In a project now underway in South Dakota, a task force of parents, school lunch supervisors, and health professionals is working on a food service manual that encourages this kind of coordination.

The manual will address some of the specific nutritional needs of children with such problems as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and autism, as well as overlapping dietary problems that may affect learning and behavior.

The manual is being edited by Dr. Cecilia Rokusek and Dr. Eberhard Heinrichs of the Center for the Developmentally Disabled, which is part of the South Dakota University School of Medicine. It is being produced under contract to the State Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, under the direction of Carol Davis Axtman, South

Dakota's director of school food services.

### Survey showed need for manual

Two years ago, Axtman and her staff did a survey of South Dakota school food supervisors to see if there was a need for training in this area. The survey showed that most supervisors felt little training had gone on to date, and most had many questions about the proper procedures to follow.

School food service staff were trying to cope the best they could, but with little actual knowledge of nutrition for the developmentally disabled. One institution had a full page of questions. A couple of schools said they were sending children home when they had problems.

Axtman, Rokusek, and Heinrichs feel it's crucial for parents and school food service staff to work closely together. According to Dr. Rokusek, schools see a lot of underweight and overweight extremes among handicapped children. While the lunch program alone isn't the entire solution, it is important.

"It should be a hand-to-hand cooperative effort," Rokusek says. Parents and school personnel must both know what they're doing in order to know when to call on medical professionals for further advice and help.

The information in the manual will include instructional guidelines for food service personnel, parents, and health professionals. It will consist of 18 chapters in an 8½- by 11-inch three-ring format so that it can be adapted by other states to their own specific needs. For example, the final chapter will be a South Dakota resource listing that may be eliminated in favor of another state's resource list.

The manual will include information on dietary aids for specific disorders (or what to feed the child, listing several options), and feeding techniques for specific problems.

Some of the specific areas to be covered will be: slow-growing and underweight children, overweight children, special diets for special conditions (such as cerebral palsy, Down's Syndrome, and epilepsy), lack of appetite or excessive appe-

tite, refusal to eat certain foods, abnormal mealtime behavior, and specific physiological difficulties that interfere with eating. Needs of both preschool and school-age children will be included.

"Every effort should be made," says Rokusek, "to understand the feeding abilities and food tolerances of the developmentally disabled person and to produce a widely varied diet within those parameters."

Physicians and nutritionists were recruited from around the state to contribute specific chapters dealing with their fields of expertise.

When editing is complete, the manual will be reviewed and approved by the South Dakota Medical Association's Research and Science Committee and by the Nutrition Education and Training Task Force of the South Dakota Division of Elementary and Secondary Education. Although it will undergo a thorough scientific review, it will be written in generally understood rather than scientific terminology.

### Manual will be used widely

Upon publication, the manual will be made available to all of South Dakota's 195 public and 78 private schools, most of which participate in the National School Lunch Program.

It will also be available to other states upon request. The State of Minnesota has already expressed an interest and has initiated a training project for parents, school staff, and developmentally disabled students.

Axtman expects the manual to be used widely. "We're making it part of our certification training," she says, "and we will have a class incorporating the manual as part of the training program, so I would expect it to end up in virtually all of our schools."

For more information on the manual and its development, contact:

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*article by Joanne Widner*



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